



## III. THE CONFLICT OF PAUL'S EXHORTATION (Philippians 3:15-21)

## A. The Responsibility of the Believer (Philippians 3:15-16)

1. The possible recipients of Paul's epistle (Philippians 3:15)
  - a. The mature believer
    - (1) As many as be perfect; Note: This in no way means those who are without sin (see 1 Corinthians 13:10; Galatians 3:3; Ephesians 4:13; Colossians 4:12; 1 Thessalonians 3:10; 2 Timothy 3:17; James 1:4).
    - (2) Those who were thus minded; Note: This refers back to Philippians 3:13-14.
      - a) Forgetting things which were behind (Philippians 3:13)
      - b) Reaching forth unto those things before (Philippians 3:13)
      - c) Pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14)
      - d) Note that Paul included himself—"Let **us** therefore, as many as be perfect."
  - b. The otherwise minded—"If in any thing ye be otherwise minded"
2. The correction of the Lord (Philippians 3:15)
  - a. The possibilities for error
    - (1) The detailed nature of the Christian life—If in "any thing"
      - a) The Christian life is not about being overall good.
      - b) The Christian life requires attention to every detail.
      - c) The concept of forgetting past things and reaching forth to what was ahead is to be applied to each aspect of life.
    - (2) The narrowness of the Christian life—being "otherwise" minded
      - a) Anything other than right is wrong.
      - b) Any other mind-set than the one presented by Paul was to be otherwise minded, and to be otherwise minded was wrong (Galatians 5:10).
  - b. The grace of God
    - (1) God shall reveal.
      - a) To *reveal* means to remove the veil.
      - b) God will not leave the believer in suspense as to any wrongdoing (Psalm 26:2; Psalm 139:23-24).
    - (2) Even "this" unto you; When God reveals sin, He reveals the specifics. He does not just point out that you have sin, but points out exactly what that sin is (see Revelation 2:4, 6, 14, 20; Revelation 3:15-18).
3. The believer's responsibility (Philippians 3:16)
  - a. The level of his responsibility—"whereto we have already attained." Accountability is based upon available knowledge (Luke 12:48; also see John 13:17; John 15:22; James 3:1).
  - b. The extent of his responsibility (see James 4:17)
    - (1) Let us walk by the same rule.
    - (2) Let us mind the same thing.



- B. The Enemies of the Truth (Philippians 3:17-19)
1. The ensample to be followed (Philippians 3:17)
    - a. The addresses of the invitation—brethren
    - b. The call to follow
      - (1) The nature of the call
        - a) Note: Be not deceived, the apostle Paul was in no way looking to start a separate sect of Christianity with himself as its head. He knew that Jesus Christ was the only Head of God’s church (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Ephesians 4:15; Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18; Colossians 2:10, 19).
        - b) The principles of following
          - i) Believers were invited to follow Paul, even as he followed Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1; see Ephesians 5:1 and 1 Peter 2:21).
          - ii) Believers became followers of Paul (and others) and of the Lord having received the word in affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost (1 Thessalonians 1:6).
          - iii) Believers became followers of other churches by receiving the word of God as it is in truth and by suffering like things of their own countrymen (1 Thessalonians 2:10-14).
          - iv) Believers were encouraged to follow the ensample given by the apostle Paul and those with him (2 Thessalonians 3:7-9). The same principle was suggested when following others (Hebrews 6:12).
          - v) Believers were admonished to follow the faith of those who had the rule over them (Hebrews 13:7).
        - c) Conclusion
          - i) Believers were encouraged to follow (go after) Paul as he followed (went after) the Lord.
          - ii) Ultimately, believers were following the Lord under the authority of His word.
      - (2) The fellowship of the call
        - a) Brethren...together
        - b) Believers are at their strongest when they are together.
          - i) Praying (Acts 4:31; Acts 12:12; Romans 15:30)
          - ii) Preaching (Acts 14:1)
          - iii) Hearing the word of God (Acts 15:30; Acts 20:7-8)
          - iv) Assembling (1 Corinthians 5:4; Hebrews 10:25)
          - v) Striving (Philippians 1:27)
          - vi) Following (Philippians 3:17)
          - vii) Being knit in love (Colossians 2:2)
          - viii) Eventually, caught up together (1 Thessalonians 4:17) and meeting around the throne (Revelation 5:6-14)



- c. The call to mark
  - (1) According to their walk
    - a) Mark them. In the context of Philippians 3:17, the meaning seems to be in line with making a mental note, considering, or giving special attention to something (see 1 Samuel 1:12; 2 Samuel 13:28; Job 33:31; Psalm 37:37; Psalm 48:13; Ezekiel 44:5; Romans 16:17).
    - b) Their walk
      - i) They walked as did Paul.
      - ii) Note: Paul encouraged believers to mark the walk rather than the words (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15).
  - (2) Having Paul and his companions as an ensample (see 1 Corinthians 10:1-14; 1 Thessalonians 1:6-8; especially see 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Peter 5:1-3)
- 2. The enemies to be known (Philippians 3:18-19)
  - a. The enemies identified (Philippians 3:18)
    - (1) Their number—"many"
      - a) This was true during our Lord's earthly ministry (Matthew 26:59-60; Matthew 27:13; see Matthew 7:13; John 6:60-66).
      - b) This was true during the ministry of the apostle Paul (Acts 25:7; 1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:17; Titus 1:10).
      - c) The Lord has promised that things will get worse (2 Timothy 3:13; 1 John 2:18; 1 John 4:1; 2 John 1:7).
    - (2) Their mention
      - a) They were mentioned frequently.
      - b) They were a heart wrenching conversation—"and now tell you even weeping" (see Psalm 119:136; Jeremiah 9:1; Jeremiah 13:17; Luke 19:41; Acts 20:19, 30-31; Romans 9:1-3; 2 Corinthians 2:1-4).
    - (3) Their opposition—"enemies of the cross of Christ"
      - a) Elymas was an enemy of all righteousness (Acts 13:8-10).
      - b) We were God's enemies (Romans 5:8-10; Colossians 1:21).
      - c) Jews are enemies concerning the gospel (Romans 11:28).
      - d) There were many adversaries to the great door and effectual that was opened unto Paul (1 Corinthians 16:9).
      - e) Note: We are ambassadors sent forth for the purpose of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:16-21). This is why Paul could weep when speaking of these enemies. The reality is that these men do not oppose us. They oppose the truth, and by doing so, they oppose themselves (2 Timothy 2:25).
  - b. The nature of the enemies (Philippians 3:19)
    - (1) Their end is destruction.
      - a) Their end is according to their works (2 Corinthians 11:15).
      - b) They will be damned (2 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Peter 2:3).
      - c) They bring upon themselves swift destruction (2 Peter 2:1).
      - d) They will find their home to be hell, only to be delivered up and cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15).



- (2) Their God is their belly.
  - a) They serve their own belly (Romans 16:18).
  - b) They feed themselves without fear (Jude 1:8-13).
  - c) The idea is that everything in this life is self-centered and self-serving. They do whatever they want to do, desiring a favourable outcome for themselves.
  - d) Unfortunately, the apostle Paul seemed to deal with the same problem among believers (Philippians 2:20-21).
- (3) Their glory is in their shame.
  - a) As believers, it is a shame for us to speak of the things done by them in secret (Ephesians 5:12).
  - b) For the world, shameful things are worthy of glory (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; Jude 1:13).
  - c) Unfortunately, there are times when the church behaves in the same manner (1 Corinthians 5:1-6).
- (4) They mind earthly things.
  - a) Showing that they are of the flesh (Romans 8:5-7)
  - b) Showing ignorance to the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:14)
  - c) Manifesting God's love is not in them (1 John 2:15).
  - d) Showing a vast contrast to the saved (Philippians 1:27-28)
  - e) Unfortunately, there are times when believers fight this same temptation (2 Timothy 4:10).
- (5) Carnal believers share all in common except for the end result. Surely, we can have compassion on the ignorant (Hebrews 5:1-2).

### C. The Conversation of the Saint (Philippians 3:20-21)

1. Our present conversation (Philippians 3:20)
  - a. Conversation defined
    - (1) Modern usage of the word *conversation* seems to indicate a situation where two people speak to each other.
    - (2) The Bible uses the word *conversation* in a different manner.
      - a) Conversation is done “without the word” (1 Peter 3:1).
      - b) It is connected to works (James 3:13; 1 Peter 2:12).
      - c) A conversation is something that others can behold (1 Peter 2:12; 1 Peter 3:2) and consider (Hebrews 13:7).
      - d) A basic scriptural definition would be *our way of life in the presence of others*.
    - (3) Consider the following—as believers we should have a(n)
      - a) Change of conversation
        - i) Our conversation was vain (1 Peter 1:18).
        - ii) We are new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17).
        - iii) We should put off the former conversation (Ephesians 4:22) which fulfilled “the desires of the flesh and of the mind” (Ephesians 2:3).
        - iv) We should follow Paul's example (Galatians 1:13, 23).



- b) Simple and sincere conversation (2 Corinthians 1:12)
- c) Becoming conversation (Philippians 1:27; 1 Peter 1:15; 2 Peter 3:11)
- d) Exemplary conversation (1 Timothy 4:12)
- b. The location of our conversation—"in heaven"
  - (1) Note the opening word *For*. This reminds us to consider the previous verses. Speaking of those who walk contrary,
    - a) They "are the **enemies** of the cross of Christ" (Philippians 3:18).
    - b) Their "**end** is destruction" (Philippians 3:19).
    - c) Their "**God** is their belly" (Philippians 3:19).
    - d) Their "**glory** is in their shame" (Philippians 3:19).
    - e) They "**mind** earthly things" (Philippians 3:19).
  - (2) Notice the contrast.
    - a) We are **reconciled** and on friendly terms (Romans 5:10).
    - b) Our **end** is life in Jesus Christ (Romans 6:23).
    - c) Our **God** is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 8:6).
    - d) Our **glory** is "in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14).
    - e) We have set our "**affection** on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2).
  - (3) Consider the implications.
    - a) Our manner of life is in heaven.
      - i) We are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3).
      - ii) We are seated together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:4-6).
      - iii) This testifies to the validity of our lives already being in heaven.
    - b) Note: Consider this problem with modern translations.
      - i) "But we are citizens of heaven" (CEV).
      - ii) "But our citizenship is in heaven" (HCSB).
      - iii) "But our citizenship is in heaven" (NIV).
      - iv) "For our citizenship is in heaven" (NKJV).
      - v) Note the difference:
        - (a) Conversation—manner of conducting oneself
        - (b) Citizen—inhabitant of a city
        - (c) Citizenship—status, rights, privileges, and responsibilities of a citizen
        - (d) Other words remove our responsibility.- c. The look of our conversation
  - (1) The place we watch—heaven
  - (2) The person for whom we are watching (1 Corinthians 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Titus 2:13)
    - a) The Saviour
    - b) The Lord Jesus Christ



2. Our future conversation (Philippians 3:21)
  - a. The present condition of our body
    - (1) It is vile (Philippians 3:21).
    - (2) It is earthy (1 Corinthians 15:35-50).
      - a) It is corruptible (1 Corinthians 15:42; compare with Genesis 3:19; Job 17:10-16; Psalm 16:10; Psalm 49:14; Jonah 2:6; Acts 2:25-32; Acts 13:33-37; Romans 1:23; also see Job 19:25-27). This is why the Jews expected the body of Lazarus to stink (John 11:39).
      - b) It is dishonourable (1 Corinthians 15:43; Psalm 35:26; Proverbs 6:33; Romans 1:24; also see 1 Corinthians 4:10).
      - c) It is weak (1 Corinthians 15:43; Job 14:10; Psalm 6:2; Psalm 102:23; Psalm 109:24; Ezekiel 16:30; 1 Corinthians 11:30).
      - d) It is natural (1 Corinthians 15:44; 1 Corinthians 15:22), suggesting this is the body obtained by man by his natural birth.
      - e) Note the differences of emphasis:
        - i) Corruptible; its decay after death
        - ii) Dishonourable; the results of sin or other infirmities
        - iii) Weak; the proneness to sin or other infirmities
        - iv) Natural; the vulnerability to sin or other infirmities
        - v) Our bodies are vulnerable and prone to infirmity.  
They bear the results of such problems and would do so until there was nothing left.
    - (3) It is mortal (1 Corinthians 15:53-54), suggesting that it has the ability to die.
    - (4) It survives on blood (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:11, 14; Deuteronomy 12:23). Note: Flesh and blood are the dichotomy for which man is known (Matthew 16:17; 1 Corinthians 15:50; Galatians 1:16; Ephesians 6:12; Hebrews 2:14).
  - b. The change of our body (Romans 8:17-25; 1 Corinthians 15:35-57)
    - (1) The time of the change (1 Corinthians 15:35-57)
      - a) Death is the departure of the soul and spirit from the body (Genesis 25:8; Genesis 35:18).
      - b) At death, a believer is immediately in the presence of the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8).
      - c) A believer's body is subject to corruption just as is the body of an unsaved person.
      - d) The believer's body is not changed until the Lord returns to catch away the church (1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
    - (2) The title of the change (Romans 8:17-25)
      - a) The adoption
      - b) The redemption of our body (Ephesians 1:14; Ephesians 4:30)
  - c. The future condition of our body
    - (1) Generally speaking—"like unto his glorious body"



- a) Awakening with His likeness (Psalm 17:15; see Genesis 1:26)
- b) We shall be conformed to His image (Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 15:49; see Genesis 1:26).
- c) We shall be like Him (1 John 3:2-3).
- (2) Specifically speaking
  - a) Glorious from vile (Philippians 3:21)
  - b) Heavenly from earthy (1 Corinthians 15:45-50)
    - i) Incorruptible from corruptible (1 Corinthians 15:42)
    - ii) Glorified from dishonourable (1 Corinthians 15:43)
    - iii) Power from weakness (1 Corinthians 15:43)
    - iv) Spiritual from natural (1 Corinthians 15:44)
    - v) Immortal from mortal (1 Corinthians 15:53-54; see 2 Corinthians 5:1-11)
      - (a) The present house
        - (i) It will dissolve (2 Corinthians 5:1).
        - (ii) It allows for groaning (2 Corinthians 5:2, 4).
        - (iii) It allows for burdens (2 Corinthians 5:4).
        - (iv) Not allowed in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:6)
      - (b) The future house
        - (i) A building of God (2 Corinthians 5:1)
        - (ii) Not made with hands (2 Corinthians 5:1)
        - (iii) Eternal in the heavens (2 Corinthians 5:1)
        - (iv) Our desired clothing (2 Corinthians 5:2-4)
        - (v) Wrought by God (2 Corinthians 5:5)
        - (vi) The final purchase that was initiated by the giving of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:5)
  - c) Life from death (1 Corinthians 15:22)
    - i) What happened to the soul (John 5:24; 1 John 3:14)
    - ii) Shall happen to the body
- (3) The implications
  - a) The glorified body cannot experience death or pain (likely includes any infirmities of the flesh) (Revelation 21:4).
  - b) The glorified body is not limited in time, travel, walls, objects, etc. (Luke 24:13-15, 30-37; see John 20:19).
  - c) The glorified body **might** be void of blood (Luke 24:39).
    - i) Man is described as “flesh and blood” (Galatians 1:16).
    - ii) The Bible states that “flesh and blood” cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 15:50).
    - iii) The resurrected Lord pointed to the fact that He had “flesh and bones.”
    - iv) It might be that this was done because the disciples would be able to easily identify the flesh and bones.
  - d. The power to make this change (Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Corinthians 15:26, 51-57; 2 Corinthians 4:14; Revelation 1:18)